

In recent years there have been several documented cases of Louisiana black bears being caught in snares set for coyotes or feral hogs. In some cases the bears were killed by the snare and in others the bear escaped or was released.

All black bears in Louisiana are protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Louisiana black bear was listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species in 1992. Since that time, restoration and conservation efforts of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Black Bear Conservation Coalition and many private landowners have led to increasing numbers of Louisiana black bears.

*It is the goal of the LDWF to remove the Louisiana black bear from the list of threatened species and add it to the list of conservation successes along with the brown pelican, bald eagle and American alligator. Like the American alligator, the department intends to have a regulated hunting season for black bears in a manner that maintains the long-term viability of the black bear population in Louisiana. **However, for the black bear to be removed from protection under the Endangered Species Act it is necessary to address causes of human induced bear mortality, including poaching, vehicle collisions and capture in snares as a non-target animal.***

At the same time as our bear populations have increased, use of snares appears to have increased in response to booming populations of coyotes and feral hogs. This, coupled with liberalized regulations that allow use of snares to trap coyotes and hogs year-round necessitate that persons using snares take precautions to avoid capture and killing of black bears.



BEAR BASICS

Black bears can be found anywhere in Louisiana, but bears are most common in those areas depicted in red on the map below. Bears are adaptable and found in a variety of habitats, ranging from deep woods to agricultural areas. It is not unusual to find them living in close proximity to humans. Bears are equally adaptable when it comes to their diets. Acorns, fruits, insects and carrion are regularly consumed. Corn is a favorite food and bears will regularly visit feeders or bait piles intended for deer or hogs.

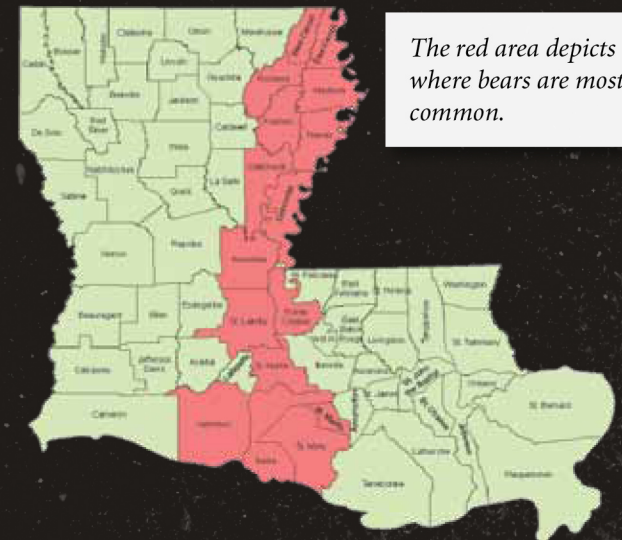
In Louisiana, bears do not truly hibernate and may be active year-round. The period of least activity is usually in February, but even then some bears will be actively moving and feeding.

BEFORE USING SNARES, TRAPPERS SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- Snares are not recommended for use in areas frequented by bears. Instead, use foot-hold traps for coyotes or cage/corral traps, with the required opening in the top, for hogs.
- If using bait, remember that bears will eat almost anything and bait that will attract a hog or coyote will also attract a bear.
- Use trail cameras to monitor a site to determine if bears are present.

IF USING SNARES, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT TRAPPERS

- Use a break-away device rated at 350 lbs. or less.
- Use a relaxing snare lock.
- Securely anchor the snare so that the break-away device can function properly. Do not use a drag.
- Position the snare so that the cable will not become entangled in vegetation or another object.
- Immediately remove the snare if bears or bear sign are observed in the area.
- Check the snare at least every 24 hours, as required by state law, but preferably more often.



The red area depicts where bears are most common.